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Vol. 6 No. 2

BRUCE COUNTY HISTORICAL NOTES

September 1964

Published by Bruce County Historical Society

THE ANNUAL DINNER MEETING

PLACE -- Paisley United Church, Paisley

DATE -- Tuesday, October 13th TIME -- 7.00 P.M.

GUEST SPEAKER - Dr. A. R. McKinnon
Dean of Education, Simon Fraser University, Vancouver B.C.

TOPIC -- "The Foliage on the Family Tree"

Tickets are available from your local representative (\$1.75). All tickets must be purchased in advance.

Membership Fees for 1965 (\$1.00) are due N O W

THE BIOGRAPHY OF NORMAN ROBERTSON (1845 - 1936)

as written by

Mrs. Norman Robertson Shaw

April 27th 1964

Norman Robertson (Walkerton, Ontario) author of "The History of the County of Bruce" and Treasurer of the County of Bruce, Walkerton, Ontario, was born on June 27th, 1845 in Belleville, Ontario. His Father Peter Robertson, was a merchant, of Scottish descent and the son of a Presbyterian minister at Kilmaurs, Ayrshire. Mr. Robertson's Mother, Sarah Ross was born in England, although of Highland descent; her Great, Great Grandfather being one of those who followed "Bonnie Prince Charlie" into England in 1745, remaining there.

Norman Robertson attended Grammar School at Belleville, but left school when only eleven years of age, that he might accompany his Father and assist him in his business when he came to the County of Bruce and settled in Kincardine in 1856. The disadvantage arising from leaving school at so early an age, was in part overcome by private study and tuition. It is interesting to note that Mr. Robertson travelled on the first through train from Montreal to Toronto. This was the Grand Trunk Railway and the date -- October 27th, 1856.

In 1863 he went to Montreal, taking a position in a wholesale dry goods warehouse, rising to the position of English buyer. In this capacity he crossed the Atlantic Ocean twenty-six times. He joined the Victorian Rifles in 1866, going to the front with them at the time of the Fenian Raid.



Norman Robertson was married in 1871 at Montreal to Lilla M. Warren, daughter of S. R. Warren, builder of church organs at Montreal and afterwards at Toronto. In 1877 he returned with his wife to Kincardine and took over his Father's business, who retired. Their marriage proved a very happy one and they were blessed with three sons and two daughters, namely:

May (Mrs. W. M. Shaw, Walkerton, Ontario)
Harry (Dr. H. L. Robertson, Charleston, West Virginia)
Fred (Dr. F. N. Robertson, Vancouver, B.C.)
Ruth (Mrs. Stuart McGuire, Richmond, Virginia)
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In religion Mr. Robertson was a Presbyterian, and was an active worker in Sunday School work for over sixty years. In politics he was a Conservative.

The position of Treasurer of the County of Bruce became vacant in 1887 and Mr. Robertson was chosen from among twenty-five applicants, and at this time moved to Walkerton.

Adesire to have put in book form and so preserve the records of the settlement of the County of Bruce, induced the County Council in 1896 to offer a prize for a Historical Sketch of the County. The Sketch prepared by Mr. Robertson carried off, jointly with another, the prize. This initial effort was followed in 1906 by a volume of 560 pages bearing the title "The History of the County of Bruce." This work has been very favourably commented upon, and classed as one of the best of the County Histories of the Province, that have been published.

He retired from the County Treasureship after holding the office for 37 years in February 1924. He was greatly beloved by all who knew him, and died full of years and honour in his ninety-first year at Walkerton on June 21st, 1936.

Grace Scott Shaw
(Mrs. Norman Robertson Shaw)
April 27th, 1964.

S. S. No. 9 Arran and Derby
HALLS CORNERS

By-- Alex Duff, Tara, Ont.

In the year 1852, Mr. George Gould, who had been in charge of the party that surveyed the Township the previous year, contracted to

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open a road between Southampton and Owen Sound. The route taken was by way of Burgoyne, through the center of the Township to Laverney, then North to the Eleventh Concession, later known as Hall's Corners, and again east to the County Line, Kilsyth and on to Owen Sound.

The opening of this road resulted in an influx of settlers and the rapid settlement of the Township.

Earlier in the year, Wm. Hall filed on Lot 31 Concession 11 and erected a log building, later used as a tavern where he, along with John Hamilton at the "Chiefs Inn" on the Sauble and Wm. Corbett, proprietor of Corbett's Hotel, Inverray, provided accommodation for the travelling public, almost all of whom were settlers with their families and household effects, making their way through to their recently acquired crown lands.

In 1855 practically all the land had been taken up and considerable clearing done. The settlers were aware of the need to provide schools for their growing families; six schools were erected in 1856, S. S. No. 9 or Hall's Corners being one of them. The school was located on Lot 31, Concession 11, two-hundred yards east of the south west corner, on a lot one-eighth of an acre in size, given to the Section by the owner, on condition that Title to the property be returned to the original owner if and when it was no longer required for school purposes.

Not too much is known regarding the earlier years, we do however know that the school house was used as a meeting place, and that the Presbyterians in the area organized as a Congregation at a Service held in the school house on May 30th, 1858.

The location was not a suitable one being low and damp, this along with over crowded conditions in the building posed a problem for the School Board.

Earlier a Mr. Dornan had erected a dwelling on a lot on higher ground near the corner, this Property was later purchased by the Board and leased to the teacher for an annual rental of twenty dollars. An effort was made to purchase land adjoining this property on which to erect a new school. The owner having recently planted an orchard near by, refused to sell. There was talk of expropriation. At a meeting held October 10th, 1863, a motion was introduced by Moncrief McDonald and Charles Speer, instruction the secretary to write the Chief Superintendant of Schools in Ontario, requesting advice concerning the problem.

The following is a copy of the letter:--

E. Ryerson Esq., Chief Superintendant of Schools in Ontario

Sir:

I am directed by the Trustees of our school section to ask your advice upon the building of our new school House. The case is this:



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We hold the one-eighth of an acre as long as it is used for school purposes, but as soon as the school is taken away we loose all right to the grounds, but as the situation is not good, being low and damp, and as the section bought a one-half acre upon it for a teachers residence some years ago, it being high and dry but at the back of this lot the former owners orchard lays along side of it and he will not sell any more ground there if he can help it. Now what the Trustees want to know - can they compel him to let them have one-quarter or one-half acre more ground there so as to have the school and teachers house together. Please let us have your opinion upon the matter as soon as possible. I am Sir

Your Obt. Serv. William Grieve,
Secretary.

The Chief Supt., in his reply did not favor the plan suggested by the Board.

The site finally chosen was on the north-east corner of Lot 30, Concession 10. Tenders for a new school were called for following a meeting held September 12, 1874. Several tenders were received namely: G. W. Miller, Arran Vale - R. James, Tara - R. J. Wilson, Tara - G & I Purvis, Tara, - W & G Glover, Invermay - Thomas Richards, Tara - Newton & Crow, Tara. On motion of Wm. Barber and James Broadfoot the tender of Thos. Richards and R. J. Wilson was accepted. The amount of the contract was \$ 1,650.00, extras added during the course of construction brought the total cost to \$1,713.00.

The Arran Council granted S. S. No. 9, permission to borrow \$ 2,000.00 on debenture: payment to be made in ten annual instalments.

The "Teachers House" the scene of many Trustee Meetings, no longer required, was sold August 27, 1884, for \$ 66.00.

The first teacher was Andrew Quinn who retired in 1868. Mr. Quinn was highly regarded as a teacher, this fact being attested to by the local Supt. Dr. Hawksworth, in his report made under the date line February 29, 1864.

A copy of the report: --

Visited the school today, find it well conducted under the efficient management of Mr. Andrew Quinn - , the children have made reasonable progress since my last visit - I greatly approve of his method of teaching writing, by copying sentences from geographical and other text-books, as the pupils are expected to become familiar with, instead of pursuing the old system - usually adopted in public schools.

Signed:
E. Hawksworth, M.D.

" To be Continued"

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Dear Sir/Madam:

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The Society is also trying to increase public interest by holding meetings featuring guest speakers who deal with subjects of general interest relating to Bruce County.

These meetings are held three times a year in May, August and October, notices being sent out to all members beforehand, telling details of time and place. The October meeting is the annual dinner meeting. Because of the great length and size of the county they are held in various towns and villages with the intention of giving everyone an equal chance of attending at least one meeting per year without having to drive too far.

The membership fee is \$2.00 per individual per year, or \$3.00 per family rate. The fee includes copies of the bulletin, Bruce Historical Notes, published two or three times a year.

The Society has a special project every year. The 1960 project was the reprinting of Norman Robertson's book, The History of the County of Bruce, first published in 1906, and out of print for many years. It is a valuable addition to any collection of Canadiana. Copies may be bought from the secretary for \$5.00 per copy.

Other projects have been a bus trip to Tobermory, a visit and dinner at Cape Croker, the yearly binding of copies of all ten Bruce County newspapers. In 1966 volunteer amateur photographers are taking coloured slides of buildings and scenes of historic value throughout the county.

The Bruce County Council granted a petition presented by Society members to erect an archives building for housing the archives of the Society. This is to be a county centennial project.

Would you care to join the Society? We feel sure you will enjoy the meetings, and the Historical Notes, plus the satisfaction you experience in knowing you are helping to make it possible to preserve the history of your home county. The membership climbed to ~~345~~²⁵⁵ in 1965, with about 35 members living outside the county from Ottawa to Vancouver.

Regardless of whether you are a member or not, you and your friends are always heartily welcome to attend the meetings. They are planned to interest you, too.

G. Harvey Linklater, Kincardine
President

Mrs. George Downey, Tiverton
Secretary-Treasurer.

(over)

Dr. Burleigh -

This is our Publicity Letter which I slip in letters to non-members, or hand out to friends & people I meet. It has helped increase our membership. This is the third re-written copy.

I have found that many Hastings County families came up to Bruce as pioneers. I can recognize some of the names when I am searching through old assessment rolls & census records. Could this help the U.E. L. members?

I am working on farm histories in my district for our Tweedsmuir History & would like help with the Hawley (Hawley) family. I am guessing they came from your district of Ontario. I cannot find when the family went from here. The oldest member I can find was Edwin Hawley, ae 60, b. Ontario, E. Meth, 1871 English. Latherine (wife) ae 63, b. Ontario. George (son) Census ae 23, and wife Jenny ae 19, b. Ont. These two generations lived in Bruce. If you have anybody asking about Hawleys, I would be glad to hear from them.

J. D.

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Robertson, John² = Mary Parrot² 4.5.1804.

U.S. List Supp.

David Sengt. Cornwall & Roxbury.

Duncan Sergeant Royal Rangers.

Ray. Clair

Daniel, Alb. Co. N.J. M.A.

son of John his father-in-law 392

Ray. Clair

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President

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Secretary-Treasurer.

(over)



Robertson

Robertson, John² = Mary Parrot² 4.5.1804.

U.S. Hist. Supp.

David Sert. Cornwall & Hopkinds.

Duncan Sergeant Royal Rangers.

Boy. Claim

Daniel, Alb. Co. N.J. W.A.
or perhaps his father-in-law 392

Boy. Claim

Daniel, Schenectady 362

Dougald, Albany Co? 144



